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COLLABORATING THROUGH TEAM TEACHING (CTT) REPORT

Prepared By Ahlam Muhtaseb, Communication Studies & Ece Algan, Communication Studies

Media and Globalization in the Middle East

A. Brief description of team teaching that was done.

In the spring of 2009, Ahlam Muhtaseb and Ece Algan team taught the upper division level topics course COMM 565: Media and Globalization in the Middle East. The focus of this effort was to offer an interdisciplinary and case study-based approach to the teaching of a poorly understood yet critically important population, across several countries in the region, contexts, and sets of complex issues related to the globalization of media and culture.

B. Why/Purpose

Teaching need(s) addressed by team teaching

The intention of team teaching was to exchange expertise, teaching skills, methods and assignments between the two faculty members. Issues pertaining to media and cultural globalization in the region were covered with readings and multimedia.

C. Preparation

What preparation(s) did you have to make to do team teaching?

In the winter quarter of 2009, both professors had several meetings to agree on the content, activities, training, and assignments of the class. They also prepared the syllabus and a reading packet jointly. We also prepared a list of videos/DVDs to show in class and purchased some of these films.

We also prepared a flyer advertising the course that we distributed all over campus. In addition, we went to several classes and distributed course fliers while giving a ten minute pitch encouraging students to consider taking our course. As a result, we had 18 students signed up for the course.

We were able to offer a modest honorarium to Shawn Powers from the University of Southern California to come to CSUSB and lecture on Al-Jazeera to our students with the help of the funds from our TRC grant.

D. Administrative Issues

What administrative issue(s) did you have to address to make team teaching happen?

The only challenge we had was the failure by the department of Communication Studies to list the topic of the class in the catalogue. In addition, apparently the coyote system doesn't allow both instructors to be listed at the same time, so many students who showed up to the class on the first day of classes had no idea that it was a team-taught class.

E. Student Reactions/ Expectations

How did the students react to being team taught? Were their expectations different? Describe other student reactions or challenges encountered regarding students.

Students perceived the class as highly informative and enlightening. They thought the exchanges between the professors helped them understand the topics and complex issues better. They also appreciated very much the visual examples we chose for them. They were pleased that there were no confusions regarding which professor would do what or grade when, etc. They were pleased that two professors worked as a team and in agreement. Students seemed to respond very well to a range of different teaching styles.

F. Teaching

What impact did this have on your teaching?

We learned a lot about each other's areas of expertise and choice of multimedia materials. We also learned from each other's unique styles of teaching. We commented on each other's performances after class; we praised each other when each of us handled a particular discussion well if we thought that led to a great learning experience for the students. We had differing but complementary teaching styles which only enhanced the classroom experience. There was a remarkable amount of discussion in this class which the instructors thought in part reflected the comfort level students felt with both instructors, individually and as a team. We both paid closer attention to what we are doing in the classroom that worked and didn't work. Talking about it afterwards greatly increases one's performance as a teacher.

G. Evaluation

What did you do to evaluate the effect of team teaching on student learning? your and your partner's teaching skills? How did this affect student grading, SETE's?

In terms of grading, we used to either divide the assignments between each other or alternate grading. We would then compare their grading or discuss the assignments after grading them, which was a very good exercise in grading in itself, and in assessing together the effect of our team teaching on students.

Besides their assignments, the quality of discussions and the incredible number of questions raised in class by students each day helped us assess the positive impact of our team-teaching. The students seemed to be stimulated and always wanted to learn more.

Since we are still teaching the course, we haven't received any SOTEs yet. However, we are planning to conduct informal evaluations during the last week of classes.

H. Other additional comments, future plans on team teaching.

This has been a great experience for both of us. We learned a lot and we established a highly needed class. We would love the opportunity to teach the class again as a team.